



Regional Service Council Minutes Region # 9

Meeting Date: 10/25/06
Meeting Location: Hendricks County Dept. of Child Services
6781 E US Hwy. 36, Avon, IN 46123

Council Members Present:

Barbara South, Steve Vaughn, Sally Wheat, Tim Miller, Judge Boles, Judge Headley, and Muriel Bayles, Commissioner Berish for Judge David, Kandi Killan and Char Burkett-Sims

Guests Present:

Jim Payne- DCS Director, Paul Boskett-President of Community Youth Workers Union of The United Kingdom, Gene Hostetter-Hendricks County DCS Attorney, Andrea Goodwin - Hendricks County DCS, Kamilla Aeschliman-Boone County DCS, Rodnee Barbee - Wernle, Pam Turner - Putnam County Youth Development and Community Youth Services Bureau, Michael Scine - Montgomery County Youth Services Bureau, Nikki Pickerel, Director of Community Partners for Safety, Mike Haarer-White's Residential and Family Services, Putnam County Youth Development Commission-CASA Director, Norma Stewart-White's Family Services, Indianapolis Regional Office

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 9:00 AM

Resignation of FCM Council Member, Lisa Johnson

- Nominees to take over the position are: Harmony Gist from Morgan County and Trish Omstead from Hendricks County.
- Regional Manager will discuss with both nominees

Early Intervention Plan

- Each Region is required to establish a plan which identifies both the service gaps within the community and service priorities. This plan will help to inform the funding decisions of the Regional Services Council.
- Sources of information that might help to identify gaps include:
 1. Child welfare account expenditures from the past.
 2. Information from existing social services agencies who might have conducted needs assessments.
 3. United Way collects data about vulnerable families as does Indiana Youth Institute.
- Andrea Goodwin and Steve Vaughn have volunteered to meet to develop planning process recommendations.

County Staff Attorneys

- DCS has created new staff positions within local offices to address a growing need for legal support. This will result in a transition from the use of contract attorneys to staff whose only area of practice will be with DCS cases.
- Judges Boles and Headley spoke in strong opposition of the DCS plan to move from contract to staff attorneys. Commissioner Berish indicated the Judge David shared these concerns.
- The concerns regarding this decision were presented by various Council members during the meeting and include:
 - There have not been any problems identified with existing contract attorneys so it seems that DCS is trying to fix something that is not broken.
 - These positions will most likely attract young and inexperienced attorneys which will complicate the court process and fail to provide the quality representation that the agency needs.
 - The sharing of attorney positions between counties will present scheduling challenges that might not be overcome.
 - This will result in greater costs than exist currently.

Comments from Director Jim Payne:

- Attorney General criticizing the Department on number of contract attorney's.
- Other counties that have already been through this process are having better experiences and outcomes with the office attorneys.
- DCS cases and child welfare practice has become more and challenging with more frequent hearings, increasing caseloads, and Child and Family Team Meetings. There is a need for attorneys to be more involved in with workers and to provide legal advice for all cases not just those that go to court.
- The definition of custodian was discussed as it relates to DCS policies addressing the investigation of abuse and neglect. For DCS to investigate, other than sexual abuse, the alleged perpetrator must live in the home or have stayed at the child's residence overnight at the time of the alleged abuse or neglect incident.

Update of DCS Practice Reform:

- There is still some conflict between DCS and CASA. It was recommended that meetings between these groups would be helpful to foster working together.
- By late December to early January, most workers in the Region should be trained to be Child and Family Team Facilitators.

Community Partners for Community Safety:

- Plans for the initial referral process were presented.
- There will be 3 community liaisons to cover region 9.

- Based upon number of referrals there may be the need for a waiting list and plans to address this.
- The potential challenges of making referrals without violating confidentiality were discussed. Char volunteered to research legal parameters for referral process using DCS report information.

Next Meeting:

Date: 11-29-06

Location: Hendricks Co. Department of Child Services, 6181 E. US Hwy. 36,
Avon, IN 46123

Time: 9:00 AM

Meeting concluded at 11:05 AM